

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

**MID-PACIFIC REGION**

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

**Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**NORTH KERN WATER STORAGE DISTRICT PERMIT FOR THE TEMPORARY BRIDGE  
CROSSING OF THE FRIANT-KERN CANAL AT SHELLABARGER ROAD**

**Central Valley Project  
Sacramento, California**

**FONSI-07-96**

Recommended by:

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**draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**North Kern Water Storage District Permit for the Temporary Bridge Crossing of the Friant-Kern Canal at Shellabarger Road**

In accordance with the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation,) has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the permitting of North Kern Water Storage District (NKWSD) to erect temporary bridges spanning the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC). This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment Number 07-96, *North Kern Water Storage District Permit for the Temporary Bridge Crossing of the Friant-Kern Canal at Shellabarger Road*, dated May 2008, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Reclamation proposes to issue a "Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands" permit to NKWSD for the construction of two one-way temporary bridges over the FKC located on Reclamation land operated and maintained by the Friant Water Authority (FWA) at the terminus of Shellabarger Road in Bakersfield, California. The proposed project would facilitate access to two construction projects that are being contemplated:

- NKWSD intends to construct a new canal to connect the Cross Valley Canal to their existing Calloway Canal.
- Big West intends to construct additional processing units within the refinery's property boundary on the east side of the FKC, just east of NKWSD's proposed new canal.

**BACKGROUND**

The bridges are needed to decrease the impacts of the construction traffic from both projects on surrounding roadways, in particular, on Rosedale Highway. The temporary bridges would create an alternate route for workers to enter the construction sites and would reduce impacts to neighboring roadways to levels acceptable to Kern County as the local permitting agency.

BWC, as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process with the Kern County Planning Department, contracted with URS of Santa Ana, CA to prepare a "Traffic Impact Analysis Report" (Traffic Study) to evaluate the temporary peak hour impacts of the increased traffic of the construction worker vehicles in the immediate vicinity of the project. This report has been approved by the County Roads Department. BWC plans to use entrances into the refinery from Mohawk Street, Fruitvale Avenue, and Shellabarger Road. The Shellabarger entrance is key because the majority of the temporary work force will need immediate access to the construction parking lot during the majority of refinery expansion construction.

NKWSD, as a public agency, has agreed to be the sponsor and encroachment permit holder for the requested Shellabarger Road alignment crossing of the FKC.

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

## **Findings**

### **Water Resources**

NKWSO would be responsible for protecting the water supply in the FKC during the temporary bridge construction activities. The proposed temporary bridge crossings would not impede water conveyance or deliveries. There will be no changes to the canal liner. The project would have containment for all activities. The nearest excavation would occur nine feet from the canal liner. There are no groundwater wells within the project area. The closest well is approximately one half mile west of the project area. There would be no significant impacts to water resources.

### **Biological Resources**

The Proposed Action as described has the potential to “take,” as defined by the Endangered Species Act, the federally listed San Joaquin kit fox and Tipton kangaroo rat. Both species may be directly affected by potential road kill mortality. Individual San Joaquin kit fox also may be subject to harassment resulting from increased levels of human disturbance, vehicle activity, and loss of foraging habitat. The Environmental Protection Agency, as part of a larger project and in cooperation with Reclamation, has submitted a biological assessment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is awaiting a response in the form of a biological opinion. This EA will not be finalized until formal consultation with the Service has been completed.

### **Traffic**

Although traffic on several sections of roadway have Level of Service values below C after construction of the bridge, the construction of the FKC bridges alleviates traffic on most intersections when compared to the impacts of no bridge construction. Building of the bridges has a small positive effect on the traffic situation in the study area.

### **Cultural Resources**

Reclamation conducted a cultural resource inventory of the area of potential effect (APE) for the Proposed Action. As a result of the inventory, one historic property, the FKC, is within the APE. Reclamation determined that the Proposed Action would result in no adverse effect to the FKC pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.5(b). The California SHPO concurred with Reclamations finding of effect via a letter dated February 7, 2008. Because the Proposed Action would result in no adverse effect to historic properties, there would be no significant impacts to cultural resources as a result of the Proposed Action.

### **Indian Trust Assets**

There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the lands and resources in the vicinity of the actions proposed in this EA. The nearest ITAs to the actions described in this EA, are located on the Tule River Indian Reservation, about 40 miles northeast of the action area. There would be no impact to Indian trust assets.

### **Socioeconomic Resources**

Implementation of the Proposed Action would assist the City in alleviating potential traffic congestion due to increases in vehicles needing to enter the construction site. Socioeconomic conditions would not change as a result of implementing the Proposed Action.

### **Environmental Justice**

Implementation of the Proposed Action would assist the City in reducing the refinery expansion and canal construction related traffic in the area. The Proposed Action for the issuance of a permit for

the bridge replacement over the FKC would not result in any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

**Cumulative Effects**

The Proposed Action would have no long term impacts to the human environment. The Proposed Action is only a temporary project. Upon completion of the construction of the refinery expansion and the NKWSD canal construction, BWC would remove all bridges, security buildings and vehicle gates, restore fencing to previous locations, and re-install canal access gates or barricades that were removed. Access ramps and all-weather surfacing would also be removed in locations directed by Reclamation and FWA. The balance of the Reclamation/FWA road improvements would remain as directed for FWA use. Therefore, no cumulative effects are expected as a result of the Proposed Action.